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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY Vietnam

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NO FOREIGN DISSEM

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM/CHINA (TAIWAN)

REPORT NO. TDCS-3/540,863 FILE

SUBJECT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT DIEM AND VICE PRESIDENT CHEN CHENG OF NATIONALIST CHINA

DATE DISTR. 19 MARCH 1963

PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

DATE OF INFO. 4-9 MARCH 1963

REFERENCES IN 89258

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (5-12 MARCH 1963)

APPRAISAL SEE BELOW

FIELD REPORT NO. FVS-8661

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE A HIGH-LEVEL MEMBER (B) OF THE CHINESE NATIONALIST DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENT IN SAIGON WHO IS BELIEVED TO REPORT WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS GOVERNMENT, A CHINESE BUSINESSMAN (F) WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACTS IN THE CHINESE COMMUNITY, AND A MEMBER (F) OF THE CHINESE NATIONALIST DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENT IN SAIGON.

APPR. IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS OCCURRED BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS AND POSSIBLY TRUE THAT THE SUBJECTS INDICATED WERE COVERED.

1. DURING THE VISIT OF NATIONALIST CHINA'S (CHINAT) VICE PRESIDENT CHEN CHENG TO SOUTH VIETNAM FROM 4 TO 9 MARCH 1963, HE AND PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM CONVERSED IN EXCESS OF TWENTY HOURS, CHIEFLY IN PRIVATE WITH ONLY AN INTERPRETER PRESENT. THE SERIOUS NATURE OF THE CONVERSATIONS WAS EVIDENCED BY THE EXPRESSIONS ON THE FACES OF THE TWO MEN FOLLOWING THEIR VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS. THE CONTENTS OF THE CONVERSATIONS DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE ADVISORS OF EITHER PARTICIPANT.

2. CHEN DELAYED HIS SCHEDULED DEPARTURE FROM SAIGON FOR 24 HOURS TO PERMIT HIM TO TRAVEL WITH DIEM TO DALAT, WHERE, EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NO FOREIGN DISSEM

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

STATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	AID	USIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	OBI	OO
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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

SANITIZED NLK-01-197-5-5-5

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VISIT TO THE MILITARY SCHOOL, THE ENTIRE TIME WAS DEVOTED TO PRIVATE TALKS. MEMBERS OF THE CHEN ENTOURAGE WERE NOT NOTIFIED UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT OF THE REVISED SCHEDULE NOR WERE THEY GIVEN ANY INDICATION AS TO THE CONTENT OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

3. MEMBERS OF THE CHINAT DELEGATION AND OF THE CHINAT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY SPECULATED THAT THE TWO MAIN TOPICS OF CONVERSATION WERE GREATLY INCREASED CHINAT MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SOUTH VIETNAM, AND THE USE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AS A BASE FOR CHINAT MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE CHINA MAINLAND. CHEN IS BELIEVED TO HAVE OFFERED DIEM UNRESTRICTED MILITARY TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT, PLUS UP TO ONE DIVISION OF COMBAT TROOPS TO FIGHT IN VIETNAMESE ARMY UNIFORMS. CHEN IS ALSO THOUGHT TO HAVE ASKED DIEM TO CEASE DRAFTING OVERSEAS CHINESE IN VIETNAM, WHICH IS CAUSING THE CHINATS EMBARASSMENT, I.E., DEMONSTRATIONS BY THESE LOCAL CHINESE AGAINST THE CHINAT EMBASSY IN SAIGON AND APPEALS TO THE CHINAT AMBASSADOR. CHEN PROBABLY ASKED DIEM TO PUBLICLY SUPPORT THE CHINAT MAINLAND COUNTERATTACK THEME AND TO GRANT AIRFIELD AND COASTAL BASES FOR CHINAT MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PORTIONS OF CHINA. OTHER LIKELY TOPICS OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN WERE THE CONDUCTING OF JOINT OPERATIONS INTO NORTH VIETNAM AND LAOS, THE MATTER OF THAILAND'S MOVEMENT TOWARDS NEUTRALITY, AND JOINT EFFORTS TO UNSEAT CAMBODIA'S SIHANOUK, WHOM THE CHINATS FEEL IS A LACKEY OF

PEIPING. CONCENSUS AMONG THE CHINAT COMMUNITY AND CHEN'S DELEGATION WAS THAT SOME ACCORD WAS REACHED BY THE TWO LEADERS, AS CHEN WAS IN EXCELLENT SPIRITS AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT.

4. ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT SLOW IN GETTING STARTED, THE VISIT DID RESULT IN BRINGING THE TWO GOVERNMENTS CLOSER TOGETHER, PARTICULARLY THE COUNTERPARTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE VISIT ALSO SERVED A USEFUL PURPOSE IN EFFECTIVELY IMPRESSING THE LOCAL CHINESE POPULATION, WHICH TURNED OUT MORE OR LESS SPONTANEOUSLY IN AN ESTIMATED ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND ALONG THE ROUTE TO THE AIRPORT TO CHEER CHEN WHEN HE DEPARTED. THE APPARENTLY GENUINE ENTHUSIASM OF THE USUALLY APATHETIC VIETNAMESE CHINESE CAME AS A SURPRISE EVEN TO THE LOCAL CHINAT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY.

5. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY NAVY AIR USMACV MAAG AID USIA CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF 9TH FIELD STATION 2ND AIR DIVISION.

END OF MESSAGE